

## Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

SSM-03 IO-13 OMB-01 /087 W  
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R 260626Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9727

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 6460

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN INTELLECTUALS PROTEST SYRIAN ROLE IN  
LEBANON

1. LOCAL AL-BAATH NEWSPAPER COLUMNIST HAS PROVIDED US WITH  
DETAILS OF PROTEST STATEMENT SIGNED BY 41 SYRIAN INTELLECTUALS  
WHICH CALLED FOR SUPPORT OF PALESTINIANS AND PATRIOTIC FORCES  
-- I.E., LEFTISTS -- IN LEBANON AND END TO ACTIONS SERVING  
IMPERIALIST STRATEGY. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, STATEMENT WAS  
DRAFTED AND SIGNATORIES COLLECTED IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. WHILE  
WORDING OF STATEMENT DID NOT SHARPLY CRITICIZE SARG  
HANDLING OF SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON, ITS INTENTION WAS TO  
GENERATE AND SERVE AS RALLYING POINT FOR POPULAR DISSATIS-  
FACTION WITH SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON. HE  
DESCRIBED 41 SIGNATORIES AS "CREAM OF OUR INTELLECTUALS AND  
JOURNALISTS," AND LISTED ADONIS -- WHO IS WIDELY RESPECTED  
COLUMNIST FOR AL-THAWRAH - AND MICHEL KILU AS TWO OF THE  
SIGNATORIES. SOURCE CLAIMED THAT STATEMENT RECEIVED SPATE  
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OF PUBLICITY IN LEBANESE PRESS, LE FIGARO, L'HUMANITE AND

ON BBC.

2. SOURCE CITED PRESENCE OF SOME ALAWITES AMONG SIGNATORIES AS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. HE ALSO WAS STRUCK BY FACT THAT PROCESS OF DRAFTING AND RE-DRAFTING STATEMENT AND COLLECTING SUPPORTERS FOR IT HAD EXTENDED OVER PERIOD OF DAYS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE BY SYRIAN SECURITY SERVICES WHICH WERE SURELY AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING. HE SAID BAATH PARTY REGIONAL COMMAND HAD REACTED STRONGLY TO STATEMENT, AND WAS NOW FORMING TASK FORCE TO DEAL WITH THIS SHOW OF DISSIDENCE. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, ONE OF THOSE WHO SIGNED DOCUMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN FIRED FROM HIS JOB. SOURCE ASSERTED THAT GROUP PLANS "TO THROW ANOTHER STONE INTO THE WATER, ONCE SURFACE BECOMES PLACID AGAIN."

3. SAME SOURCE REPORTED THAT SHORTLY PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THIS STATEMENT JAMAL ATASSI (WHO LED HIS FACTION OUT OF NASSERITE/ARAB SOCIALIST UNION PARTY FEW YEARS AGO IS ALLEGED PROTEST AGAINST PRES. ASAD'S DECISION TO RENEGE ON PROMISES TO LIBERALIZE SYRIAN POLICIAL SYSTEM) HAD DISTRIBUTED PAMPHLET IN WHICH HE DIRECTLY ATTACKED SARG MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND HARSHLY CRITICIZED REGIME. SOURCE ASSERTED THAT ATASSI'S PAMPHLET WENT MUCH FURTHER IN TERMS OF DIRECTLY CRITICIZING SARG THAN DID SUBSEQUENT STATEMENT OF 41. HE OBSERVED THAT ATASSI HAD NOT YET BEEN ARRESTED AND DESCRIBED HIM AS VETERAN POLITICAL TACTICIAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF IN SYRIAN POLITICS.

4. COMMENT: SOURCE IS CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF MANY SIGNATOIRES OF STATEMENT AND CLAIMS HE HAD A HAND IN REVISING DRAFT. IN HIS VIEW, EMERGENCE OF GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS READY TO TAKE "OPEN STAND AGAINST REGIME'S HANDLING OF LEBANESE CRISIS" MARKS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT DISSIDENTS STILL ORGANIZING AND THEIR MOVEMENT IN GESTATION. WE NOT SURPRISED THAT BAATH PARTY COMMAND TAKING THIS LATEST MANIFESTATION OF DISSIDENCE SERIOUSLY. SUBSTANCE OF THEIR CRITICISM IS ALSO INTERESTING IN THAT IT CALLS ON LEADERSHIP TO SHOW STRONGER SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS. IT IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT BEDROCK OF SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS AND THEIR

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CAUSE IN SYRIA IS STRONGER THAN THAT FOUND IN THE OTHER CONFRONTATION STATES.  
MURPHY

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERVENTION, PALESTINIANS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, INTELLECTUALS, POPULAR SUPPORT  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976DAMASC06460  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760363-0992  
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**Line Count:** 110  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 26 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SYRIAN INTELLECTUALS PROTEST SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON  
**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, SY, LE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006